



Hearing on “U.S.-China Relations in 2019: A Year-in-Review”

Opening Statement of Commissioner Jeffrey Fiedler

September 4, 2019

Washington, DC

Good morning, and welcome to the last hearing of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission’s 2019 Annual Report cycle. Thank you all for joining us today. Our hearing today will review and assess key developments in the economic and security dimensions of the U.S.-China relationship in 2019, and examine China’s relations with Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The Commission began its hearings this year—which marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of U.S.-China diplomatic relations—by examining China’s internal and external challenges and their effects on China’s ability to sustain economic growth, project power, and spread its influence around the globe.

This year has been one of extreme volatility in the relationship between the U.S. and China. Change and unpredictability have been so significant since we began our hearings this year that Commissioners thought it would be valuable to revisit and explore some key topics in the economic and security realms.

There is an increasing amount of commentary in the foreign policy community conjecturing about the likelihood that the relationship between the U.S. and China is undergoing permanent change. This commentary further characterizes China as a “rival,” having upgraded it from a “competitor”. The word “enemy” is less frequently used, but not absent.

The previous assumptions underlying U.S. policy, such as the current international order benefits China and capitalism brings with it democracy, have been shattered and abandoned even by those who fervently advocated them. It seems to me these false assumptions have yet to be replaced by more realistic ones.

Our goal today is to catch up on the facts about important developments and hopefully gain some insights about how to craft and navigate what will clearly be a new and different relationship between the United States and China.

I look forward to hearing today’s expert witnesses, and thank them for being here to share their expertise with us. In addition, I would like to thank the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for securing this room for our use today. I will now turn the floor over to my colleague and co-chair for this hearing, Vice Chairman Robin Cleveland.